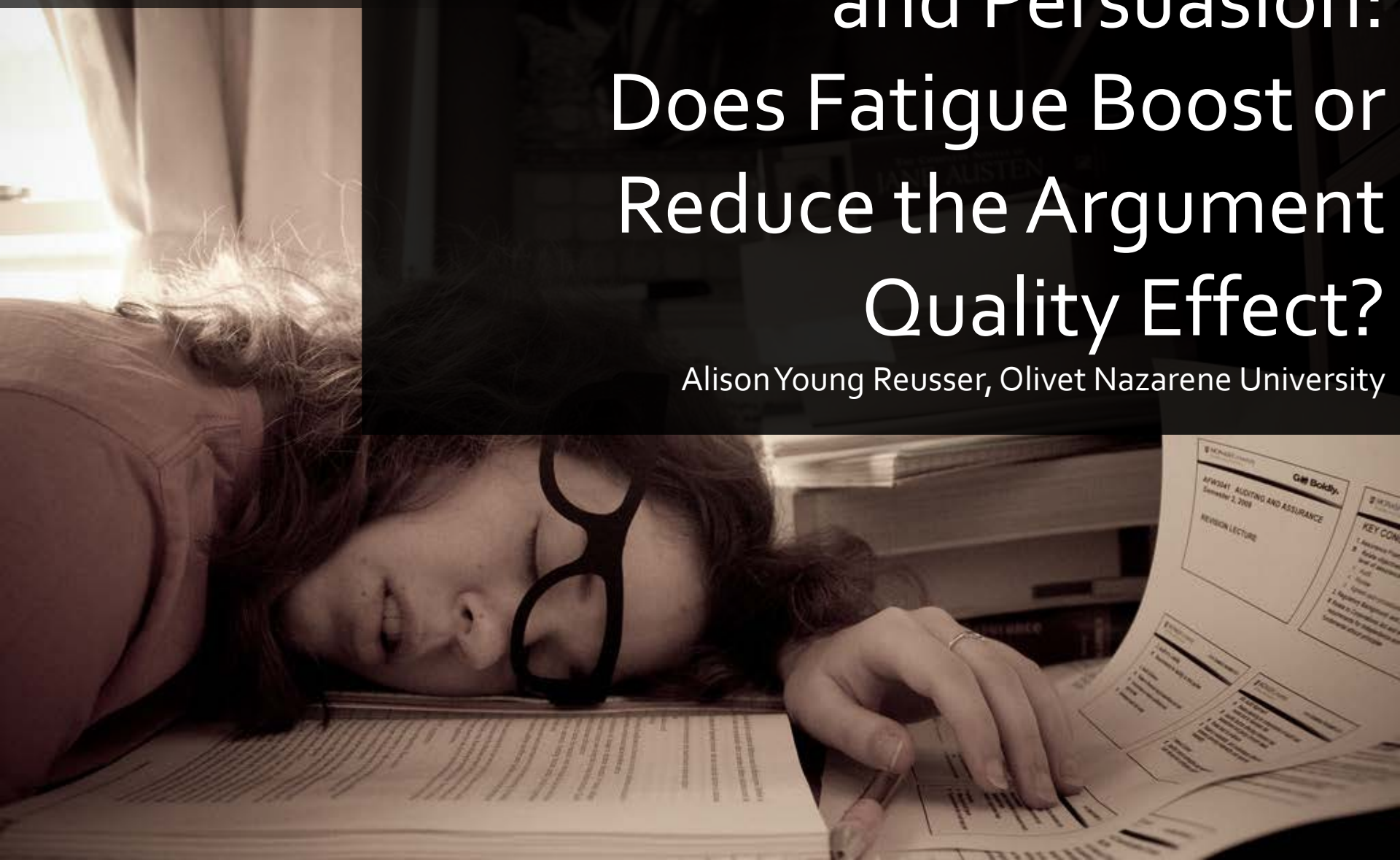



# The Hot-Cold Empathy Gap and Persuasion: Does Fatigue Boost or Reduce the Argument Quality Effect?

Alison Young Reusser, Olivet Nazarene University



# Hot-Cold Empathy Gap



I was late  
because I  
was tired.

- Being in the same visceral state as someone increases empathy
  - Cold torture (Nordgren et al., 2011)
  - Impulsive eating (Nordgren et al., 2007)
- What if that person is trying to persuade you?

# Argument Quality Effects

- Difference in persuasion between strong vs. weak arguments
- Stronger if:
  - Relevant (Petty et al., 1981)
  - Thinking a lot (Need for Cognition; Cacioppo et al., 1984)
- Weaker if:
  - Distracted (Petty, Wells & Brock, 1976)

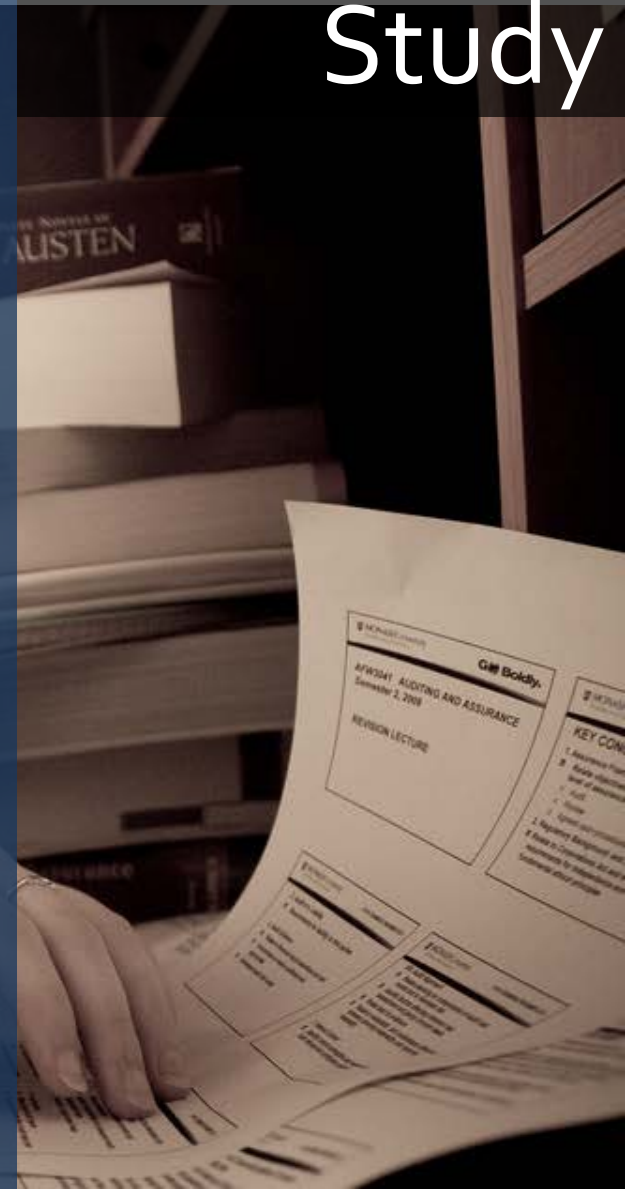


# Current Research

- If someone is in a relevant visceral state (fatigue):
  - Will persuasion increase regardless of argument quality?
  - Will argument quality effects:
    - DECREASE due to distraction?
    - INCREASE due to relevance?
  - Will NFC moderate any effects?

# Current Study

- 310 MTurk participants (151 women)
- Argument quality condition: strong vs. weak
- Instructions:
  - George, online contractor
  - Has not had enough sleep (3-4 hours per night)
  - Missed project deadline
  - Email to his boss



# Stimuli: Strong vs. Weak Argument

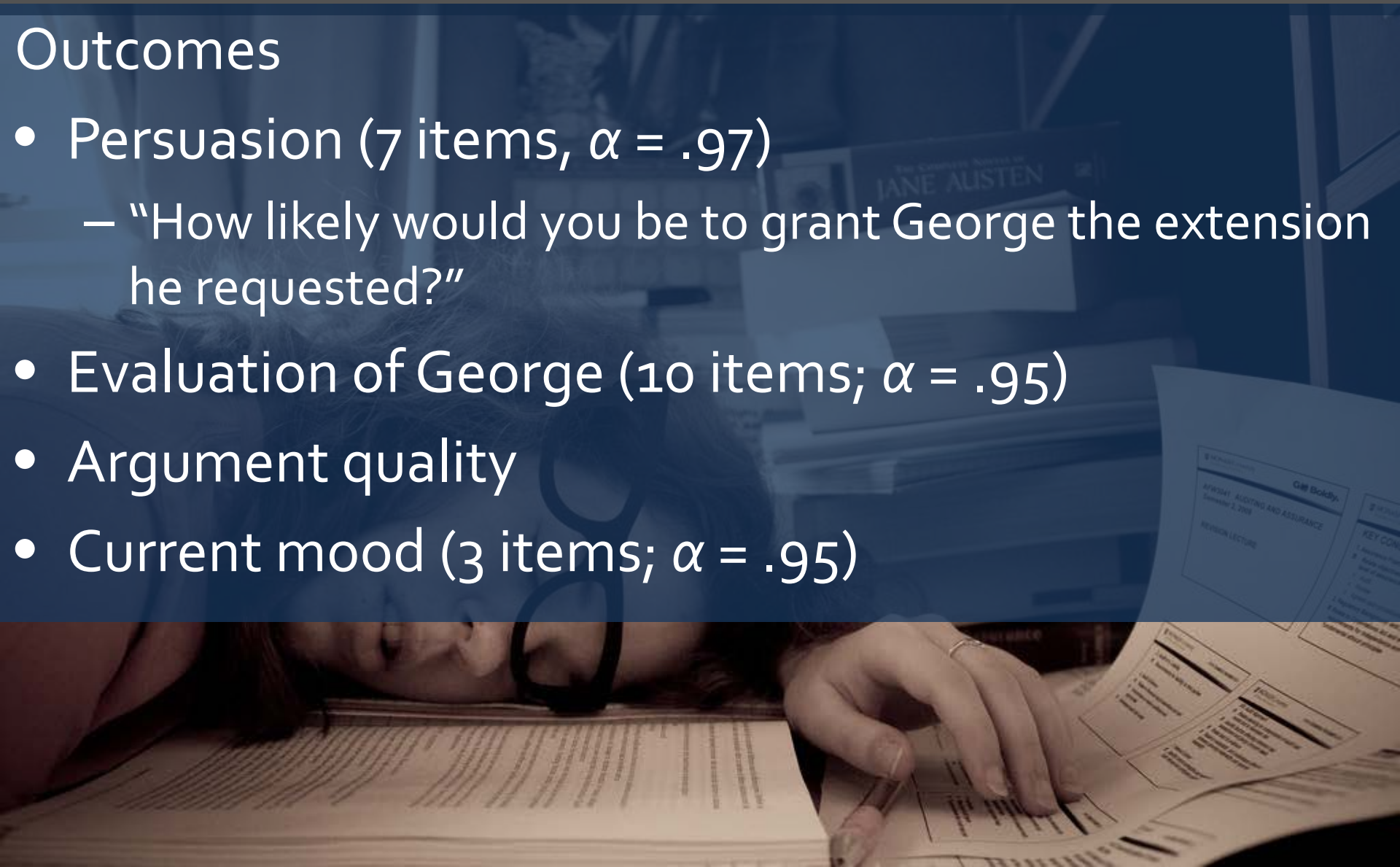
- I am so sorry for missing last night's deadline. My only explanation is that I have been unable to sleep much over the past week .... I am currently **about 90% finished** with my report and I am attaching what I have so far. I would like to request an extension...An extension would allow me to **be as thorough as possible in reviewing all potential sites for the new building.** ...Granting me a short extension **would also prevent you from having to start from scratch** and give it to someone who hasn't been on the project ...
- I am so sorry for missing last night's deadline. My only explanation is that I have been unable to sleep much over the past week... I'm currently **about halfway finished** with my report and I am attaching what I have so far. I would like to request an extension...An extension would allow me to make sure **none of the sites in my list are mistyped or duplicates.** ...Granting me a short extension **would also allow the rest of the company to relax for a bit** before having to read through my report.



# Measures

## Outcomes

- Persuasion (7 items,  $\alpha = .97$ )
  - “How likely would you be to grant George the extension he requested?”
- Evaluation of George (10 items;  $\alpha = .95$ )
- Argument quality
- Current mood (3 items;  $\alpha = .95$ )



# Measures

## Mediators

- Personal Involvement (10 items;  $\alpha = .94$ )
- Similarity to George (3 items;  $\alpha = .84$ )

## Predictors

- Current fatigue (4 items,  $\alpha = .94$ )
- NFC (18 items;  $\alpha = .95$ )



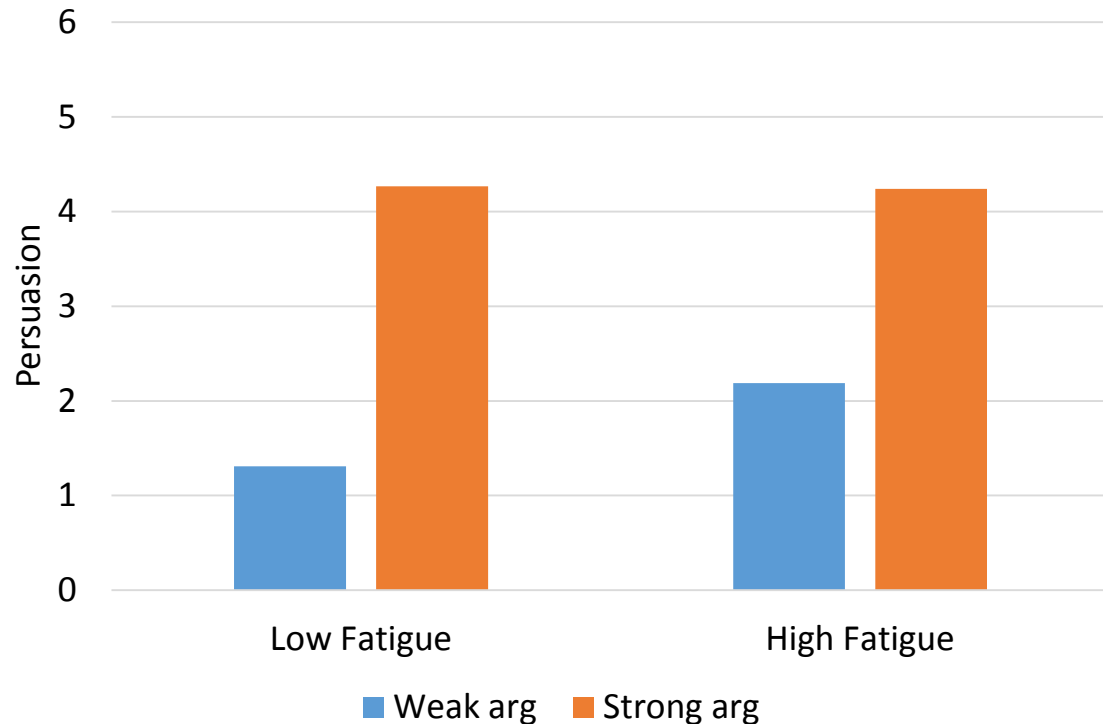
# Results

- Between-subjects ANCOVA predicting **persuasion** from:
  - Argument quality (strong vs. weak)
  - Current fatigue
  - NFC
  - All interactions
  - Covariates: mood, age, gender, argument complexity

# Results

- No effect of/interactions with NFC
- Argument quality x fatigue,  $F(1,296) = 7.39, p = .007, \eta^2_p = .02$

Simple effect of fatigue for weak arguments,  $b = .44, SE = .13, F(1,296) = 12.26, p = .001, \eta^2_p = .04$



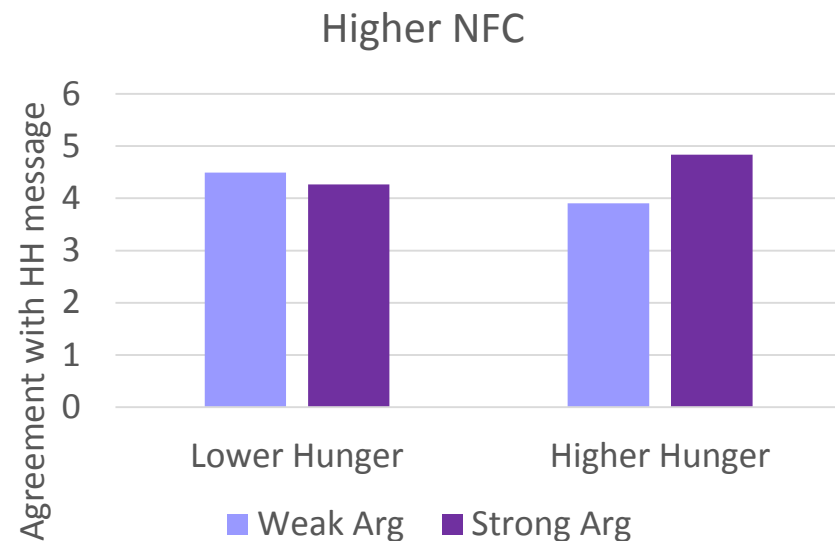
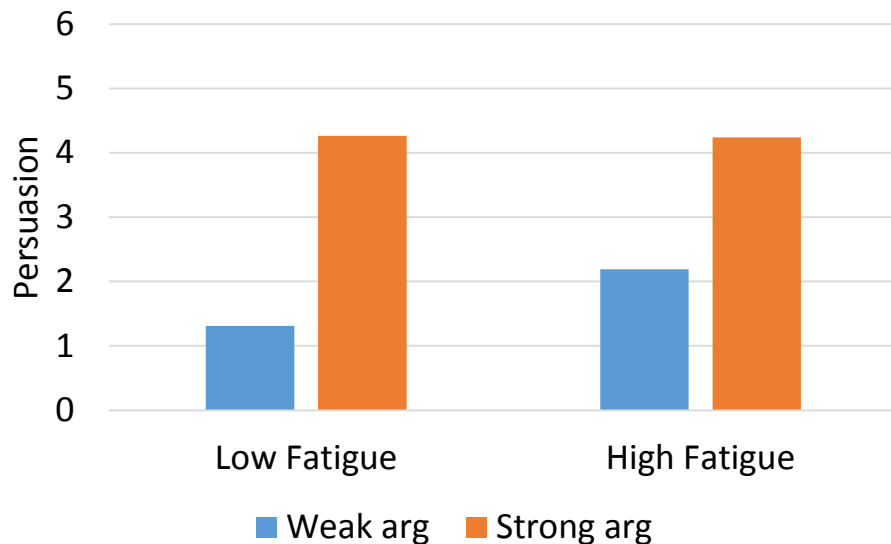
# Which prediction is supported?

- Impact of fatigue
  - Did persuasion increase regardless of argument quality? No.
  - Did argument quality effects...
    - Increase due to relevance?
      - Apparently not.
    - Decrease due to distraction?
      - Possible. Weak arguments were more persuasive for fatigued people
      - BUT evidence that weak arguments were more INVOLVING for fatigued people...



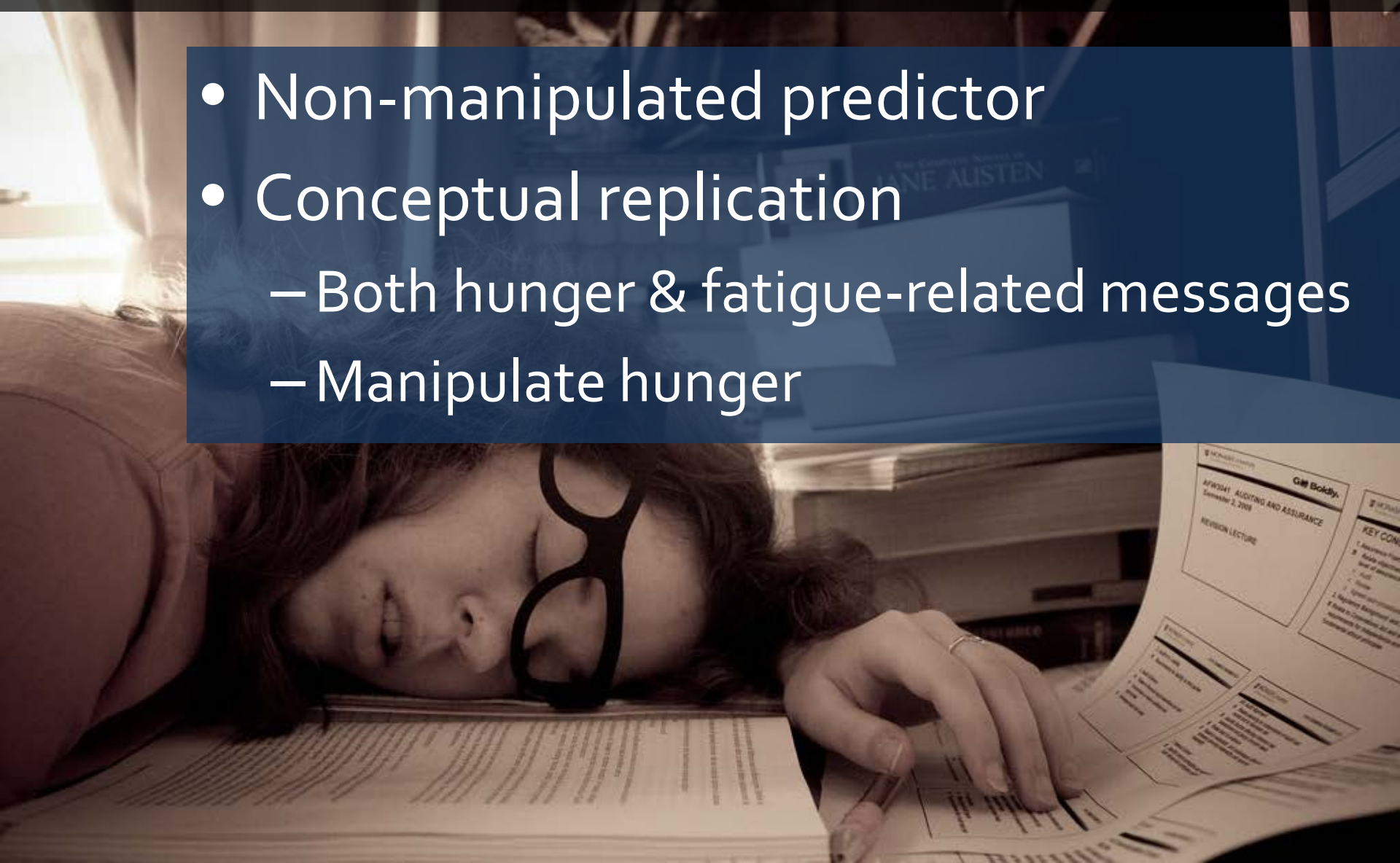
# Compare with Research on Hunger

- Among people higher in NFC, hunger increased argument quality effects
  - Hunger = higher relevance?
  - Fatigue = higher distraction?



# Limitations & Future Directions

- Non-manipulated predictor
- Conceptual replication
  - Both hunger & fatigue-related messages
  - Manipulate hunger



# Thank You!

- Anna George
- Andy Luttrell
- Russ Fazio

